

heart strings

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/28229484) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/28229484>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Video Blogging RPF , Minecraft (Video Game)
Relationship:	Clay Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , GeorgeNotFound & Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Coffee Shops & Cafés , Alternate Universe - College/University , Study Date , Flirting , Hot Chocolate , Fluff
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of december prompt week
Collections:	Dream Team Safespace Prompt Week 2020
Stats:	Published: 2020-12-22 Words: 2971

heart strings

by [meridies](#)

Summary

“J-E-O-R-G-E?” George said outrageously. “You have to be kidding me. He practically got it right that time.”

or, Dream is a barista, George is his favorite customer, and both of them are truly terrible at flirting.

Notes

prompt for today was hot chocolate/candy canes!! enjoy <3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“J-E-O-R-G-E?” George said outrageously. “You have to be kidding me. He practically got it right that time.”

“Are you sure he’s not just genuinely a bad speller?” Sapnap asked curiously. “You know, all baristas are bad spellers. It’s in their blood.”

“No, this is on purpose,” George said hotly. “I’m here every morning, and he spells it wrong every single time. This is the last straw for me.”

Sapnap didn't answer, and George glared over at him to see Sapnap trying desperately to stifle a smile. When George only glared at him further, Sapnap caved and began laughing.

"Stop laughing!" George said, even though Sapnap was starting to make him smile too. "It's not funny!"

"Of course it's funny," Sapnap declared. "You have the dumbest name in the world and are getting upset when people can't spell it right."

George glowered. "I don't have a dumb name. *George*. That's perfectly normal. And besides," he said quickly, "That asshole spells everyone else's names correctly. It's just mine that's wrong."

Sapnap nodded sagely. "So you're going around asking people if their name matches the one on their cup?"

George blushed sheepishly. "I'm just assuming."

"Well," Sapnap said, "How about you *assume* that it's a mistake."

"Last week he spelled it *G-R-O-G*."

"I think that's pretty close to how your name is spelled."

George scowled. He narrowed his eyes at the barista, who was paying no attention to the back booth that Sapnap and George were cloistered in. "He's fucking with me. I know it."

The barista finished pouring someone's latte, and passed it across the counter to a girl with a smile. He didn't spare a glance towards George.

"See?" George said indignantly. "He's trying to make me upset. I know he is."

"I guarantee he's forgotten all about you. He doesn't even know you exist."

Still, Sapnap leaned back in his chair and watched the barista move around, same as George. Both their drinks went forgotten.

"He's kind of cute," Sapnap said thoughtfully, after a long moment. "In a golden retriever type of way."

George wrinkled his nose. "His personality makes him ugly."

"Do you think he goes here?"

"He works at the campus coffee shop," George said dryly. "I'm sure he does."

The bell tinkled as someone else entered through the doors. The barista stopped wiping down the counter and turned to greet them with a smile. George's head tilted to the side. He *was* kind of cute, he supposed. In the way that a puppy with floppy ears was cute. He was George's type— not that George would ever say that out loud in front of Sapnap.

"Maybe you'll see him around." Sapnap elbowed George in the side. "Maybe you're taking the same classes this semester."

A shudder ran down George's back. "I hope not. Maybe he'll get fired. That way I never have to see him again."

As usual, George's luck was terrible.

It was nearing eight in the morning when George pushed through the doorway of the coffee shop. He was exhausted (although he had scored a record of seven hours of sleep last night). His first calculus exam of the semester was in an hour and a half; George intended to spend all that time cramming for it. The year had barely reached October, and even a month into the semester, George's grades had already begun slipping.

To make matters worse, the weather threatened rain— clouds were hanging low over the sky, ominous and grey. Before noon the entire campus would be underwater.

"One black coffee, small," George said breathlessly, fumbling for his wallet, and then glanced up.

"Sure," the blond barista said pleasantly, and George cursed his luck. The barista *definitely* recognized him. Sapnap had been wrong. "Any cream?"

"No," he said. "No cream. No sugar. Just a plain small black coffee."

"Of course." The barista grabbed a cup from the stack and then said, "What's the name?"

"George," he said, and for extra emphasis, "G-E-O-R-G-E."

"Wonderful," the barista said, presumably writing another atrocious misspelling of George's name on the side and completely ignoring him. "That'll be seven dollars."

George blanched. "Seven dollars?"

The barista held out a hand. "Pay up."

"It's a black coffee," George said dumbly. "No way that's seven dollars."

"I factored in a hundred percent tip," the barista said, unconcerned. "Who *doesn't* tip a hundred percent these days, really?"

George scowled. He dug out a crumpled ten dollar bill from his pocket and placed it flat on the counter. "Fuck off."

"Thanks," the barista said, and passed George's drink across the counter. He pointedly didn't give George his change. "Here you are."

George took it gratefully; even though he was stressed, his caffeine fix was always wonderful first thing in the morning. Then he took note of the scribbling on the side, in wide loopy letters.

Gregory.

"Oh, fuck you," George sighed. "By the way, it's George. G-E-O-R-G-E. You know, a very common name. It's not that difficult to spell."

"And it's Dream," the barista said, already turning away. "D-R-E-A-M."

Dream (D-R-E-A-M) was manning the cashier again when George came in two weeks later.

“You again?” George huffed. “How are you *always* here?”

“This is my job,” Dream said blandly. “I make money here.”

“I somehow feel like you’re always working whenever I’m here,” George muttered. “Do you not take any classes?”

“All of mine are in the afternoon,” Dream said. “What idiot picks classes at nine in the morning?”

That was fair, George admitted to himself. At the beginning of the semester he had assumed that nine AM classes couldn’t possibly be that bad. His calculus and biology professors had instantly proved him wrong.

“So?” Dream said. “Your usual black coffee?”

His calculus test had gone very well. George had received his grade in class that day: a flat ninety-two. Far better than what the rest of the class had achieved. George was in a good enough mood to surprise himself by saying, “Make me something interesting.”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “Something interesting?”

“That’s not absurdly sweet or gross,” George amended. “My friend told me I should try to branch out more.”

Dream nodded, and under his breath: “Well, he’s not wrong.”

“I heard that.”

“I’ll make you something good,” Dream said, “Don’t worry about it.”

George thought back to Sapnap’s conversation with him earlier. Sapnap had told him firmly to *stop bothering that poor barista*, and then, with a wry grin, said, *maybe he has a crush on you. That’s why he keeps spelling your name wrong. He likes seeing you upset.*

George’s face was hot enough to fry an egg on. *He does not*, he protested. *He’s the biggest asshole in the world.*

Sapnap laughed, bright and clear as a bell, and George furiously did not look at all in his direction. He really hated his best friend sometimes.

“Here you are,” Dream said, and passed an innocuous white cup across the counter to him. George picked it up suspiciously.

“What is it?”

“Something interesting,” Dream said mysteriously. “Try it.”

“It’s not poison, right?”

Exasperatedly: “It’s a dirty chai latte. Don’t be so judgemental.”

“I don’t really like tea,” George said under his breath, but he obligingly tried it. It genuinely was very good, but George wasn’t going to give Dream the satisfaction of showing that he enjoyed it. “How much is this?”

Dream waved a hand. “It’s on the house.”

“Oh,” George said, surprised. He had gotten used to Dream ridiculously overcharging him for any one of his drinks. “Thanks.”

“Whatever,” Dream shrugged. His cheeks were slightly pink.

George frowned. He took another drink of the latte; it really was quite good. The warmth spread through the cup into his hands and throughout his chest. His entire body felt quite hot, though he wasn’t entirely sure why.

It was probably because of the heating inside. That must be it.

He turned the cup to read the same on his side. At this point, it was more fun rather than irritating to see whatever ridiculous misspellings Dream had come up with. This cup read *G-O-G-Y*.

George fought to keep a smile off his face. He wrapped his coat tighter around himself and turned to go. He didn’t turn back to wave goodbye to Dream.

November dawned crisp and cold over campus, bringing three straight days of sleet and hail. By the time George made it through the glass doors of the coffee shop, his winter jacket was nearly soaked through. The chill went straight to his bones.

“Wow,” Dream commented. “You know, you’re really nailing the ‘wet dog’ look today.”

“Thanks,” George huffed, and beelined towards one of the remaining free spots in the back. His go-to study spot was the library, but half the students on campus had the same idea going into midterms week. He had taken three steps into the building before realizing that there wouldn’t be a decent place to sit, let alone finish his work. He would be too easily distracted by everything, and usually George relied on silence to get any studying completed. He wasn’t sure why he had come to the coffee shop to study instead— arguably, it was much louder. But something about the place calmed him down.

“The usual?”

“One moment,” George muttered, and he went through the motions; unwinding the scarf from around his neck, peeling off his soaked winter coat, unsticking his sweater from his back. His backpack was heavy and thudded to the ground. His English books were heavier than bricks.

Dream surveyed him curiously from the counter. He propped his chin in his hand, and then turned.

“Bad,” he called, “I’m going on break.”

The other person behind the counter gave Dream a thumbs up; George assumed they were Dream’s manager.

Dream pulled his apron off, folded it up, and tossed it under the counter. He followed George to

one of the pastel booths in the back and sat directly across from him. He glanced at the textbooks George was pulling systematically from his backpack.

“Studying for midterms?”

“Unfortunately,” George sighed.

“What classes are you taking?”

“I’m a computer science major,” George said, and Dream shuddered.

“Gross,” Dream said. “Why would you want to study that?”

“I like it,” George muttered defensively. “It’s calming. It’s objective.”

“So you’re worried about your midterm for that?”

“No,” George huffed. “I’m actually fairly decent at it. I just have this ridiculous Gen Ed class that my advisor told me to take, and I don’t know shit about English Literature of the 19th Century. I sit in the back of the class every day.”

“Lucky for you, I’m an English major,” Dream said, and George raised an eyebrow.

“Really?”

“Of course,” Dream said. “Who’s your professor? Winfield?”

George shook his head. “Lobanov.”

Dream winced. “I had him freshman year. If you bring up anything about dramatic irony in your essays, he’ll score you up. Make sure you mention feminism if you end up writing your essay on Vilette. I’m sure I can find a few study guides if you need them.”

George blinked. He hadn’t actually expected any decent help from the barista who he was only fifty percent sure hated him. “That’s... thank you for that, actually.”

“And your essay doesn’t need to be good,” Dream said, “Lobanov likes it when you use his own analysis, which I personally think is a terrible way to teach a class, but—regardless. Study your notes. You do take notes, right?”

George thought back shamefully to his notebook, full of doodles, random scribbles, and didn’t contain a single thing relevant to his English class. “Of course I do.”

“Wow,” Dream sighed. “All STEM majors really are stupid, huh?”

George glared. “Just because you can’t do a bio lab to save your life—”

“Save it,” Dream interrupted. “I’ll go get you a drink and then we’ll study together.”

George blinked. Study with Dream?

“If you’re sure,” he said hesitantly, but his words had fallen on deaf ears. Dream already pushed himself up, and he called over his shoulder as he went.

“Something interesting?”

“Sure,” George muttered, and stared hopelessly down at his notes. Surely Dream would be able to help him. All English majors had taken this class at one point; it was one of the easiest classes to get into, and thus everyone took it to fulfill their Gen Ed requirements.

Dream came back a few moments later. He placed a cup in front of George, and without hesitating, George drank it.

“Holy shit,” he said, and nearly coughed his throat out, “Is this rocket fuel?”

“It has four shots of espresso in it,” Dream said. “You look like you need it.”

“I think this is going to kill me,” George said, but took another sip. It was acidic and sharp and perfect for studying. Dream was right; George had slept a total of five hours last night, and exhaustion tugged at his mind. This particular drink was going to boost him throughout this entire studying session and maybe far into the night.

He turned the cup to the side out of curiosity. The name scribbled on it was *G-E-O-R-J*.

“Alright,” Dream said, and tapped George’s notebook, “Let’s get started.”

The day after his midterm, George burst into the coffee shop, giddy and overexcited.

“Well?” Dream said, and leaned over the counter. “How did it go?”

“*Excellent*,” George proclaimed. “You were right. Our essay was on Vilette.”

Dream’s grin was satisfied. “I knew it.”

“I probably got at least a B,” George boasted. “Maybe even a B plus.”

Dream nodded approvingly. “That’s decent.”

“Decent,” George spluttered, “That’s the highest grade I think I’ve ever gotten in an English class.”

“All thanks to me, of course.”

His tone was teasing. Something burned in George’s chest, vivid and warm.

“Of course,” he said, “I really couldn’t have done it without you.”

Standing this close, with only the counter separating them, it was easy to see just how vivid Dream’s eyes were. They were quite green, weren’t they?

Dream cleared his throat. “So? What did you want to drink?”

It was second nature at this point for George to say, “Something interesting.”

Dream nodded. He had likely suspected as much. “Coming right up.”

George watched him work. It was a clear day outside; the rain from the weeks earlier had vanished across the horizon. The trees were transforming into vibrant color, though half their leaves were gone already. Campus had exploded into shades of red and yellow. George’s feet crunched through

dried leaves on all his walks to classes.

Dream's movements were deft and swift; he barely seemed to register what he was going. George found himself paying particular attention to his hands. Long and smooth, like a model's would be. George imagined those hands in his and then startled himself. Why was he thinking that?

"Here you are," Dream said neatly, and put a cup down in front of George. "Something interesting for my favorite customer."

George scrutinized the cup and then took a tentative sip; to his surprise, it wasn't something awful, like last week when Dream had managed to coerce him into drinking a frothy monstrosity that was a caramel milkshake. This was chocolatey and tasted like peppermint and was overall fairly good.

"I like it," George said in surprise.

Dream hummed. "Good. I thought you might."

"What is it?"

"Just hot chocolate," Dream said. "With nutmeg and peppermint."

"It's fairly decent."

"It's my favorite drink," Dream blurted. "Even though I suppose it's seasonal."

George glanced at him. "Any other favorite drinks?"

Dream ducked his head. He looked slightly abashed. "You've tried them all."

"Really?"

"Of course," Dream said, "Did you think I'm just making you the most obscure drinks on the menu? I've tried them all as well."

"I figured that," George said, though he hadn't figured it at all. Dream's hands rested on the counter, tapping absentmindedly. George wondered how bad it would be to reach across and hold them. Would they be just as warm as the hot chocolate was?

"So," Dream said, "Are you planning on studying here?"

George glanced at the time with a hint of regret. His biology class was in twenty minutes.

"I have to go," he said, "But I'll be back this afternoon, if you're still here."

Dream hummed. "My shift ends at noon."

"Oh," George said. "Then—"

"But Thursday morning I'm free."

Dream's ears were bright red. George's heart skipped a beat in his chest.

"I'll be there," he said, trying and failing to keep his voice steady.

The clock ticked every closer to the hour. He needed to be on his way if he wanted to make it in time. With the promise of Thursday morning firmly glued in his mind, George turned to go. He

was four steps out of the coffee shop when he looked down at the hot chocolate in his hands.

He turned it.

To his surprise, it read *G-E-O-R-G-E*.

Beneath it, there was a phone number.

George stumbled. He looked back through the cafe windows, but Dream was talking to another customer. He was determinedly not looking in George's direction at all.

George's cheeks burned. He ducked his head and tried to ignore the image of Dream's face, flushed and soft, that revolved in his mind. His mouth tasted of peppermint and chocolate. Dream's favorite.

He was riding on the high of most definitely passing his English midterm. Dream had just given him his number, they had a date on Thursday morning, and the day was one of the rare ones in the middle of November where the sun was out. It was clear and warm on his skin. There wasn't a cloud in sight.

It was certainly shaping up to be a good rest of the year, George thought. This week was going to prove it.

End Notes

if you enjoyed please leave kudos/comments (or subscribe to me on ao3 lmao), they are very wonderful to read!!

Works inspired by this one

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!